

**Political History Collection
Interview H.0004.09 : Tape 9**

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and

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Interviewed by: Melvyn Goldstein and J.T. Surkhang
Name: Alo Chöndze
Gender: Male
Age: 74
Date of Birth: 1919

Abstract

Alo Chöndze was a major leader of the People's Association in Tibet and India in the 1950s. In this interview, he describes in great detail being sent to rob some Chinese who were transporting dayan coins to Nagchuka. He discusses selling his house, and how he was perceived to be a spy, and how he later built a smaller one. Additionally, he describes performing a tenshug (long life ritual) for the Dalai Lama, details what it is, and also details the People's Association's attempt to try and stop the Dalai Lama from going to China to attend the National People's Congress.

Tape 9

A:

Then they [Kashag?] told me by phone, "Regarding the audience, you have to submit a petition to request an audience [with the Dalai Lama]. Then it should be announced." Then I said, "I will report to the Kashag again and I have already reported to the Dalai Lama. There is no need for the announcement." Then I went to the Kashag and they said, "This time, the audience will not be granted." Then I was planning to go to Nepal for a pilgrimage. I was not planning to go to Bylekuppe. I thought of going to Dharamsala. I will tell you about this later on.

Now I have a secret thing to tell you. The main thing is that we restored the Tibetan People's Association. The association started opposing the Chinese on the 27th of the 9th month of 1947. And I am talking about the organization and its secrets. I sent my son Tenzin Gyurme [Tib. bstam 'dzin 'gyur med] to Australia before 1987, and we, the couple, were there. We had decided to die from the early times, and even now we don't care about dying and we have to do the movement. If we do something and keep my son, it would be pitiful because his relatives have settled in Australia. By the grace of the Three Jewels, we could send him and we continued the movement. My wife didn't know much about this.

Since you have been with the nomads and wrote their history, you should keep this in your mind. At that time, the representative of Nagchuka was called Getob Targye [Tib. dge stobs dar rgyas]. He sent a messenger to me saying that the Chinese were sending a large shipment of dayancoins to Nagchuka by yaks, and from Pöndo [Tib. phod mdo], they were going to be sent by horses and mules. There was a large amount of dayans. "So we should attack them and rob them." I feel ashamed when I talk about stealing. But if we could steal the money, it would be like cutting off one hand of the Chinese because they were mainly using dayan. "So the two of you should discuss this." Then I and Andru Gombo Tashi, Atru Lama, Sing Gelong, Wangchen Lhangön and my house manager, who was from Markham, met in a small house I had. When we discussed and talked about receiving the message, they said it would be good to do this. All the people were extremely glad. But, I said that it was not easy to do that and I told them the way we would steal it in Litang. We all agreed to attack the caravan. But, poor things! We had to kill some Tibetans. There was no choice but to kill them. Then we asked when they would come. Our plan was to go to Phembo Gola [Tib. 'phan po go la]. From there, we could see Lhasa, and when we crossed the pass, then we would reach Phembo and go in front of Reting and go north to Jogtsela [Tib. lcog rtse la] Mountain Pass. It was said that they would reach us on such and such date, though I don't remember the date. I asked about the people coming looking after the loads [Tib. rgyab 'ded]. There were some Chinese.

But the transporters were Tibetan and they could get a transportation fee, but they would be killed along with the Chinese, and we said, "Poor things!" and we prayed saying the mantra o mani padme hum. At that time, the shengo nicknamed "the bearded ape," Pagyau la [Tib. spra rgya'u lags], said, "Poor things! They would be [killing] the thief Kangstug [Tib. rkang btsugs] [?]." We

discussed in detail on the way how to do that and to not let the Chinese know. If they knew about that, let alone robbing them, we would be finished. So we should be firm and tactful. The discussion went on very well and each person put forward their own ideas, and said that the 4-5 of us couldn't do this. Gombo Tashi and Sing Gelong were older, but I was young. Also, Tashi Rabten [Tib. bkra shis rab brtan] and Atru Lama were a little older than me. So we needed more young people to raid them.

We finally organized 12 people. One of these wasn't able to go, so we left with 11 people. Then we crossed Gola Pass and went to Lhundrup [Tib. lhun grub] Dzong. Then we went to the Phöndo Iron Bridge [Tib. lcags zam]. Then we sent informers to watch where they arrived and where they were coming from. These informers didn't know about this [the robbery]. We just told them our goods were arriving. Then we arrived near the Phembo Gola and when we got there, I saw that the dayan were coming. We had discussed what to do. We were to destroy them and then do something with the dayans. I think each yak had two boxes and there were 60-70 yaks. We then discussed and decided to wait until the caravan was closer to Lhasa at Phembo Gola, and then we would attack and kill all the Chinese and the nomads with them and take the dayans to Lhasa. We discussed the dayans and how each of us also needed some, right?

Q: Since it was a large amount, it would be very conspicuous to take.

A: Yes, we would be able to take them. So we discussed this and decided to attack in Phembo. First we would destroy the people coming after the loads. We couldn't let the Tibetans [the nomads handling the yaks] go because they would take the information. So they would also be destroyed. Then we would become the people going after the loads, so we should decide whether to go to the right or the left.

The people in Lhasa would not know of this right away, but the Chinese would know about this in 2-3 days. By then, however, the work would be done and there wouldn't be any problems. We got to the back side of the Gola Pass the day before their arrival. Then we saw they were coming and we attacked them at the Phembo Gola Pass and destroyed them. We got the dayans in our hands and we discussed how much we should take. We didn't cross the Gola pass toward Lhasa, but went out from there toward Damshung [Tib. 'dam gzhung]. We knew the [other] route from Dam via Yangpajen [Tib. yangs pa can] to Lhasa. If we did too much, the Chinese were spread everywhere and they had telephones. Then we decided to take as much of the dayans as we could, and throw the rest into a lake and release the yaks to graze in the pastures.

Q: Why weren't you able to take all the dayan with you?

A: Oh! If we were to go with so many pack animals, the Chinese would have learned right away. In each box was 1,000 dayan. So one animal carried two boxes with 2,000 total dayan, and there were 60-70 loads.

Q: What did the Chinese do with their dayan?

A: When the Chinese first came, they bought the Tibetan kudrak with their dayan.

Q: Weren't there misers [locals] where you attacked them?

A: No. Not around there. Even if they heard some shots, they wouldn't know what it was and we would continue to move the caravan so they would think we were just transporting the Chinese loads. If there were Chinese offices nearby, then they would know that. Just before we reached Damshung, we met to discuss whether to take the dayan into Lhasa or hide it. So we went on and came to a small lake. There we took the best 20 pack animals with 40 boxes for Lhasa. We also had good horses and mules. As for the rest of the dayan, we took off our boots and waded into the water and threw the boxes into the water in the holes or hollows [Tib. kong dong]. The yaks we didn't need were driven up a ways to a good pasture, where [we] took off their saddles and let them go. Whether the Chinese liberated us or not, we liberated the yaks.

At this time, our work was extremely secret. That night, we rode all night, and at dawn, we arrived in Yangpajen. There we stayed in a remote, out of the way place where there were no Chinese. Then we went in Yangpajen Monastery for the pilgrimage. It was a monastery of Shamar [Tib. zhwa dmar] Rimpoche. Then, as for the share of the People's Association, it was impossible to carry it to Lhasa. So we stayed there for a day, and we said we were traders and we were waiting for some people. And we asked for lodging and they rented us a room. There were also some representatives of the People's Association who were from Yangpajen, and we also told them that we had to wait for some people and we were staying there for awhile. So they lent us a broken down monk's quarters on the first floor. We put the dayan in the room and locked it and we went to Lhasa.

Then we went to see what the Chinese knew. If they knew, they would know in two days and we would be arrested. But there was nothing. So the members of the People's Association got some dayan and at that time, I had to build the third floor of Songra. As I told you yesterday, I built the two stories by myself, and the Nepalese also did that. But I am not telling you about the third floor. So at that time, I built the third floor of my house and made myself famous, and married Yangdzomla, who was like a deity. The Ganden Tri [Tib. khri] Rimpoche came to my wedding and all of the representatives of the People's Association gave me khata scarfs.

At that time, Andru was also in a difficult [financial] situation internally and was a little bit bankrupt, though he was famous. Andru's son was also there. I don't think he knows about this because he was going to school. This allowed Andrutsang to rise up from bankruptcy and trade again. We divided the dayan among us and gave a little to the common [fund] of the People's Association. This is one of the secrets that I wanted to report to the Dalai Lama with the submitted petition, and I asked for an audience, but it was not granted. On the contrary, I was beaten by the Women's Association [in India later]. When the Dalai Lama came to Australia, I got an ordinary audience, but I didn't get an audience to report the secret. He is not to be blamed because Gyalo Thondup, et cetera were powerful. As for the Dalai Lama himself, he would have granted me the audience because I offered him so many presents for the teaching [I sponsored] and he became famous. Actually, I sacrificed my wealth and my life for the common affairs of the people. I should have been granted the audience in Australia, and I would have been happy to tell him

those things. But, I am fortunate to be able to say this to Dr. Goldstein, J.T. Surkhang, and my son. This is a very precious karmic result.

Q: Was there a lot of talk in Lhasa then about the dayan being stolen?

A: Oh yes, everyone was talking about the Chinese dayans that were stolen. The Chinese said earlier that I was an Indian spy, now they were saying that I was an American spy because I built such a big house. They are not to be blamed. Really the house was big and the representatives came to the wedding, and they should have suspected [me]. So after a year or so, I built a smaller one in Surkhang Linga. At that time, it was said that I was an American spy, and people used to come in and also look from outside, so it was bothering me. So I told Tshadi Nyerpa [Tib. tsha sdi], a rich trader who traded in Tö and bought wool from the Drongpa [Tib. 'brong pa] area and who was famous, "It is not good if I don't make my house smaller, and the office of the People's Association is held here. They might name me as an American spy and arrest me, and then all of us would be in danger and our association would not be able to hold [meetings]. So I am going to build another house. I will sell you this house. It would be very good if you say you bought it." However, internally, we took an oath saying that I had taken the presents given when asking to rent the house [Tib. zhu rten] and also the rent for two years from the Nepalese. "In the future, you can say that you bought it and you can collect the rent," and we signed a document. Then Gyabing Chöndze and I built the house near Pele Tshongkhör.

Then one day, I noticed from the Songra window that there was an Indian trader who I had seen in Kalimpong, but whom I didn't have relations with. He was like an agent trading skins and musk. He was called Sharpa [Sherpa]Pasang. He was just waiting in front of the house looking around at it. So I went down and he said Namaste [Nepalese greeting], and I said the same. Then he spoke Nepalese and I didn't understand it. I asked him who he was and he said he was Sharpa Pasang.

Q: Was this before you went to the welcome reception for the Dalai Lama?

A: This was before the Dalai Lama went to China [therefore, about 1954]. He said, "I came from Kalimpong and want to see you." So I said, "Come up," and we went upstairs. He said, "I came last night. It is good that I was able to meet with you today." He spoke in some English and Pare, so I asked him if he knew Tibetan and he said yes. Then I asked him if he knew English and he said yes. So I gave him a letter I received from my son in India and told him to read it, although the letter was already read to me by K. B. Babu. He could read it. I told him to speak only Tibetan because I don't know English or Hindi. I asked him, "Why did you come to see me, what do you have to sell?"

He said, "I don't have any trade. I was sent specially here by Pandit Nehru to meet you." I was shocked to hear this and told him, "Do you mean Pandit Nehru sent you to me?" He said yes. I said, "What did he send you for?" Then he took a letter from his pouch and said that Nehru told him that in Lhasa, there was a People's leader [named] Alo Chöndze. So I should purposefully go to meet him. I have some points to tell you. He was wearing a chupa. Then he said, 'There are some kudrak in India and they are talking about the Chinese arriving in Tibet, but since the Chinese arrived in Tibet, Tibet has had a very bad [hard] time. Tibet is located between India and China, and Tibet is India's neighbor. We feel disappointed because the Chinese have suppressed Tibet. Tibet has always been independent. So if we don't support them, we, the neighboring country, are also in danger. There are some kudrak in India and we have been making relations with them, but they haven't been effective and couldn't do much. But, we heard about the establishment of the People's Association in Tibet. This is a big organization with great strength. The leader of People's Association is Alo Chöndze. So you should meet him in person and tell him to come with you to India.'" I heard the pleasant sounding talk and then stopped when someone came to visit. Then talked more, then stopped. And it went on and off like that until lunchtime. So we had lunch and then I told my wife to lock the door and we talked all afternoon. At first, I was very glad when he said, "The best would be if you went to India, and we will discuss with you about how to help the People's Association. If this isn't possible, then sending a representative would be the next best [thing]. If you do this, then the Indian government will help the People's Association." I asked him, "What kind of help is the Indian government thinking of giving?" He said, "Their plan is for war, with help with money and arms." I asked, "How can you send it with all the Chinese troops here?" He said, "You send someone and we will explain it all to him." I said, "I can't leave for India at once as I am the head of People's Association, but when this work is finished, I plan to come to India. This offer of help by a government to the People's Association is good." Then he asked me as if he just thought of it, "How many people do you have in the People's Association, and how many kudrak and soldiers are there? And what is the connection of the Association with the Dalai Lama?"

When he asked that I started suspecting him. Then he asked me, "How many wireless [operators] do you have in the People's Association? The kudrak in India have connections with the government of India, but your group doesn't. That's why I came today." He also asked me, "Do you have relations with the Guomindang and the US? Recently, a lot of dayan was stolen from the Chinese, how did the People's Association do that?" He was implying this was done by the People's Association. Then I thought, now this is not good. He smoked and I smoked and he said, "I came from India yesterday," but he was smoking Chinese cigarettes. I had cigarettes, like the brands 500 and 900. From then on I became suspicious of him. We ate dinner together and then he said, "I still have some questions to ask you. I have a check for 100,000 Rs for expenses for you, or a representative, to go to India."

Then he was about to open some stitches of his chupa. Then I thought that he was definitely a Chinese spy and that it was dangerous. Then I said, "Today I have many visitors. I am very glad that you came here. We should have a good discussion on the matter for going to India." Then I asked, "Where do you stay?" He said, "I am staying with the goldsmith Thöndrub." This person was a mix breed between Tibetan and Nepalese, and also a big trader in India where he would sell yak tails and musk.

I told him [Sharpa Pasang], "Today, there are many people coming here, so let's talk the day after tomorrow because nobody is coming. And you can sleep here because I have many rooms, and I will tell you about when I am coming and regarding sending the representatives and those things. Would that be okay for you?" He said, "Yes, thank you." Then I sent him back.

That day, I called Tshatru Rimpoche. At that time, he was working in the Editing Office [Ch. bian shi]. I didn't tell Rimpoche the questions that were put forward very clearly. I thought if I told him in detail, he might get scared. I told Tshatru Rimpoche,

"Regularly, the Chinese are always broadcasting and writing in the newspaper to destroy all spies and the running dogs of the foreign imperialists, and the feudal lords. And that people should be alert and arrest them, right?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Is India also imperialist?" He said, "Yes." Then I told him, "I don't know where the Chinese offices are located. So please tell Zhang Jingwu, or whomever it is, that one spy of the foreign imperialists came to Alo Chöndze saying that he was sent by Pandit Nehru and told Alo Chöndze to come to India, and that they talked a lot. So Alo Chöndze was very scared and asked that person where he lives and he made an appointment to see him the day after tomorrow. The Tibetan People's Association is an internal association and we don't have any relations with foreigners."

Actually, we didn't have relations and we couldn't make relations. The Nepalese were in Lhasa and the Indians were in Dekyilingka, but we couldn't make any relations with them, and there was no Guomindang then. There were no kudrak either.

Then I told Tshatru Rimpoche, "That person is staying in the house of a goldsmith called Thöndrub on Kyirepara [Tib. skyid ras pa ra] Street. He is going to come to me the day after tomorrow if you don't arrest him right away. He just arrived 1-2 days ago and he has cracks on his face. He is definitely a spy. Please inform the Chinese because we are really in danger." Then he said, "Yes, I will tell this to a person I know in Yuthok or whomever." I told Tshatru Rimpoche to let me know the next day.

The next day, Tshatru Rimpoche came and said, "I met the interpreter Phüntso Tashi [Tib. phun tshogs bkra shis] and some of their General Secretary [Tib. drung spyi] and told them that Alo Chöndze said, 'It is very dangerous if you don't arrest him.'" Then the Chinese asked Rimpoche, "Does he have blond hair and a long nose? Regarding this, we will report to our superior. Please tell Alo Chöndze that if he comes again, please look at him carefully and ask him questions. Thank you. It is very good that he has reported it." Then Rimpoche told them, "He probably doesn't have a long nose because he was called Sharpa Pasang. He is like a Tibetan."

Before Pasang left my house, I had told my servant Chömpel [Tib. chos 'phel] to follow him and find out where he would go. After he followed him, he found that he went to the house of the goldsmith Thöndrub in Dechen Rabten [Tib. bde chen rab bstan]. This was the right place, where he said that he lived.

On the day after the next day, I waited for him when he was to meet me. I thought if he came that evening, it would be very dangerous because he was a spy of the foreign imperialists. Then I told Tshatru Rimpoche again, "Please do something tomorrow because if he comes to my house, it would be dangerous. Now he is at Thöndrub's house. Please arrest him before he comes to my house." On the night he was going to come, I told my wife Yangdzom, "If Pasang comes, tell him I had to go to Shöl for an urgent matter and can't come back, so don't come tonight. We will meet tomorrow night." At that time, it was really dangerous. So I biked to Denyertshang [Tib. gdan gnyer tshang] Tsendrön's house where there was a good place to play mahjong, and I played mahjong. I came home the next day and I asked my wife if he came the previous night and she said he hadn't come.

Then I sent someone to call the goldsmith Thöndrub [the person with whom he was staying]. I knew him though he was not a member of the People's Association. He came and I asked if he rented a room to Sharpa Pasang. He said, "Yes." I asked, "Where is he now?" He said, "He left the day before yesterday in a Chinese automobile." This was the time when there were vehicles along the route via Phari to India. I asked him what he did. "Does he trade with you?" He said, "I don't know what he does. He said that he came for a tour [Tib. Ita skor]. He didn't seem to have things to trade." Then it was proven that he was [a spy], and I went to Tshatru Rimpoche and told him, "He stayed in the house of the goldsmith Thöndrub. He was to meet me, but I heard that he has left in a Chinese vehicle. He was really a spy of the Indian imperialists. I feel regretful that you couldn't catch him. Please tell the Chinese about this."

Had I been there that night, he would have come and taken out the checks [money] and that stuff and the Chinese would have come and arrested us, saying that Alo Chöndze was a spy with the foreign imperialists. If that happened, what should I say? He would confess that he was a spy and the Chinese would go through the motions of shackling him and taking him away, and I would be taken away because there was proof, like the checks. He would be taken away and would have food with Zhang Jingwu. But, by the grace of the Three Jewels, I had that thought and could make a good plan.

You asked me a question about stealing the dayans. At that time, I [he, Thöndrub] was purposefully sent to question this. So they wanted me to say that I stole it for the People's Association, and they also wanted me to say that Surkhang, Yuthok, and Drönyerchemmo were also involved in it. And they also want me to say that it was the Dalai Lama's order.

Q: The mistake he made was that he smoked that cigarette, right?

A: The first was the cigarette for which I suspected him. Then the way he started his talk, when he went through the motions of shutting the door.

Q: When the Dalai Lama went to China, the People's Association tried to stop this. Did you have contact with Phala about this?

A: Yes. We, the People's Association, were mainly doing things like performing rituals for the Dalai Lama's long life. Just before the Dalai Lama went to China, the People's Association heard from Drönyerchemmo that the Dalai Lama was going to attend the National People's Congress meeting. He had agreed to this. So we said, "If this is the case, it is terrible." At that time, we were still holding the old brain [thinking in the way] of the old society, so we thought it would not be right for him to go to China. Therefore, we didn't have any choice but to stop him. Then Drönyerchemmo said, "The Dalai Lama has already agreed to it, but you, the People's Association can take use some means [to stop this] if you can." He gave this instruction because we were close.

Q: How did you meet to have this talk with Phala?

A: I always would meet with Drönyerchemmo. Leave aside politics, I had a private relationship with him. He invited me to parties and I played mahjong with him. A few days after this, we, the People's Association, took a khata and went to the gag (Secretariat)

and told Phala and asked him to report to the Dalai Lama on their behalf not to go to China. Then Drönyerchemmo reported this to the Dalai Lama.

Q: Did you submit a petition to the gag to request the Dalai Lama on which the people signed their names?

A: For this, there was not the custom to submit a petition and sign it. We just offered an envelope with five sang as a substitute for the mandala [Tib. man dral rten dod], and a khata called Ashe. This was offered through the gag as a whole, not [by] Drönyerchemmo alone. We went there and verbally told him to report this to the Dalai Lama.

Q: What did you say verbally?

A: We said, "We heard that the Dalai Lama is going to China. This is not right at all. Please do not go. We the people, regardless of [if we are] monks and [or] lay people, cannot bear the responsibility of this. The Dalai Lama's life safety is important. Furthermore, regarding both religion and politics, it is not right for him to go to the Communist Chinese. This is what we, the People's Association, want to report." Phala said, "You can leave now and we will give you an answer in a few days." A few days later I went to the gag to see if an answer had come and Phala said, "The Dalai Lama said that he has decided to go to China. He says that it is for making good Sino-Tibetan relations and also to attend the National People's Congress."

So we left and again called a meeting. And we decided to perform a longevity ritual, a tenshug, for the Dalai Lama and to ask him not to go at that time. Then we went to Ngabö. He was first standing on the Chinese side and he was also powerful in the Kashag. We heard from the early times that Ngabö is an upright [Tib. drang po] person and he speaks truthfully. At that time, Ngabö was also going to China. We told Ngabö, "This time, the People's Association is going to perform a tenshug. Regarding the Dalai Lama going to China, toward the Chinese, please tell the Chinese that they should not take the Dalai Lama to China for the meeting." At that time, we would not go to the Chinese, so Ngabö was our backer.

Q: Who went there?

A: 3-4 of the representatives went to him, one of these was Gyabing Chöndze. He played mahjong with Ngabö. Then Ngabö said, "There is no problem for you to hold the People's Association and perform the tenshug. But it is the Dalai Lama's idea to go to China. It is his own decision whether to go to China or not. There is no need to tell the Chinese."

So at that time, we didn't have any way to stop the Dalai Lama and we did everything according to the law. Then we reported to the Dalai Lama through the drönyerchemmo that we were going to perform the tenshug, and it was approved and the tenshug was very successful. The Dalai Lama gave good instructions to the People's Association saying, "It is good that you have performed the tenshug. You don't need to worry about me, and you are not to be blamed for being worried. I am going to China, but I will definitely guarantee to return after no more than one year." Since this was the first time we heard instructions from the Dalai Lama, people were glad and we prayed on that.

Q: Normally, would you perform the tenshug to the Dalai Lama when he was there or would you perform it through Phala?

Q: Tenshug is a religious activity where the lamas, monks, kudrak and the people all gather together. The expenses for this were all from the sponsoring People's Association, and mainly they would recite prayers. Tea and rice were served and the representatives of the People's Association would offer khata and presents to the Dalai Lama. There were different levels of elaborateness for the tenshug.

Q: Was the tenshug performed in Norbulinga or the Potala?

A: In Norbulinga. Finally, a high lama would do the prayers. It was probably Trijang Rimpoche who did the prayers, telling the Dalai Lama to live long and for religion to flourish and for the sentient beings to be happy. Normally, after the tenshug, the Dalai Lama would say one word saying, "It will be alright." But, on that day, the Dalai Lama specifically told the people about his going to China, and he also said, "I did a divination about whether to go to China and it came out in favor of going. It is also important to attend the National People's Congress and to have friendly relations with the Chinese".

Before the tenshug, we had a meeting of the People's Association and said, "When performing the tenshug, there will be tens of thousands of people gathered in the Norbulinga. So what about all the people prostrating to the Dalai Lama and yelling, 'Dalai Lama! Please stay and do not go to China [Tib. thugs rjes gzigs/ bzhugs rogs gngang]'" This was called dongshu, which means to report directly in front of the Dalai Lama [without prior permission]. This was done when the Kashag and the courts didn't settle cases well in the past and the people were agitated. When the Dalai Lama saw that, the case would be settled fast in a good way or the other. Among the People's Association, there were many people who knew the government rules and they said, "Oh! We are not allowed to do this. We have done everything according to the rules. If we did this, it would not be right."

I did a lot of work to get as many good and intelligent people into the People's Association, but it was difficult to get the good people. For example, there was Andru Gombo Tashi who was great. Similarly, there were Jagö Namgyal Dorje, Surkhang Chandzö, Shatra Chandzö and Phala Chandzö. I brought them to the tenshug. During the denshu, as soon as the Dalai Lama was seated on the throne, we offered a khata. When the tenshug was started, we had to offer another khata, and the third khata was offered to express thanks [Tib. bka' drin btang rag].

In the People's Association, there were some who left the Association. They thought that if they were in the People's Association, one day the Chinese would arrest them and kill them. For example, in the beginning, Andru Gombo Tashi also withdrew a little bit, to tell you the truth. Later, he didn't go to the meetings and sent his chandzö in his place. At that time, I said, "The first to offer a khata to the Dalai Lama will be Phala Chandzö. The second will be Andru Gombo Tashi, the third will be Jagö Namgyal Dorje." And there were also people like Atru Lama. These khata were offered to the Dalai Lama's hands, where there were about several thousands of people. Normally, people couldn't get in front of the Dalai Lama. So they were thrilled to do this in front of all. As a

result of this, they became enthusiastic members of the Association and voluntarily asked me when the meetings would be held. This was my strategy to get them committed to the People's Association. I sat at the end and did some cooking work.

Then after the tenshug, the preparation for the Dalai Lama's departure started with people burning incense and seeing him off. We made plans for being part of the seeing off ceremony of the Dalai Lama [Tib. phebs skyel]. When the Dalai Lama left, the people burned incense the size of a house so that the smoke was [still] there after three days. All the people prayed. Just before the departure was done, the People's Association went to visit Phala and the Kashag. I told them to take responsibility for his health, like with the food of the Dalai Lama, cleanliness, et,cetera. I told them that the Dalai Lama's monk official cooks should go with him and cook whatever he usually eats. They said, "Of course, we will do that. There will be no problem. We will take responsibility."

Q: Before that, did you hold a meeting?

A: We had a meeting of the inner circle people where there were about 25 people at first, and it was okay to have 10-15 from among them.

Q: Who was funding this?

A: It was the People's Association's money. The meeting was held in Shingra located on the south side of Tsuglagang. Let me talk a little bit about how we got the donations for the People's Association. Before we collected donations from Lhasa masses, we collected donations in butter, tsamba, et cetera, from our members. We said the best thing would be donations in money. There were several clerks of which one of them would collect gold, one would collect money and one would collect things like butter and tsamba. On the first day, we collected donations for the tenshug. Usually, people would bring butter and tsamba for the offering and tea bricks. But we needed money. But things were also okay. Then I suggested, "Before the people come to make the donations, we, the representatives, who are all knowledgeable people, should donate gold and silver and display them so the people can see them." Then we also offered the Dalai Lama a golden wheel with one thousand spokes [Tib. gser gyi 'khor lo rtsibs stong], which is auspicious and is said to be the symbolic implement [Tib. phyag mtshan] of the king of universal respect. We told the people, "You can donate whatever you have. Like a beggar can also donate his extra bowl if he has one." We displayed the gold and silver coins, trangka garbo, that we had donated, and some people went through the motions of collecting them. On the next day, the donations increased a lot, like with gold. Among my tenants, there was the Nepalese trader nicknamed White Cap, Shamo Garpo [Tib. zhwa mo dkar po]. They were the rich gold sellers. Some of us went to buy the gold for making a bigger golden wheel. At that time, the Nepalese had gold bricks. We told them that we wanted at least 50 in total. "Bring the whole brick to us and we will cut the amount we want." The Nepalese were very glad to do that because all of us were traders. Each brick had about 200-250 total.